

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 H-01 INR-05 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 OMB-01 IGA-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 ACDA-10

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P R 200910Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6395

INFO DOD/ISA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 4816

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MASS, SN, US

SUBJECT: U.S. - SINGAPORE MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 4761; (B) STATE 259022

1. TIMING OF REFTEL B COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE. IN MY MEETING TODAY WITH DEFMIN GOH KENG SWEE (REFTEL A), HE RAISED AS I THOUGHT HE WOULD QUESTION OF EX-ROC OFFICERS IN RSAF, AND EXPLAINED NEEDS FOR THESE OFFICERS MUCH ALONG LINES OF OUR OWN EVALUATIONS: RSAF RESOURCES ARE SPREAD THIN AND SINGAPOREANS NOW ON HAND LACK DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO STATE THAT WHILE HE AND HIS MINDEF COLLEAGUES UNDERSTOOD THAT WE IN THE U.S. EMBASSY AND ALL OTHERS ON U.S. SIDE INVOLVED IN MILITARY RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE WERE DOING THEIR BEST TO BE RESPONSIVE TO GOS NEEDS, THIS POINT WAS NOT YET FULLY APPRECIATED BY EVERYBODY, "INCLUDING SOME IN THE PM' OFFICE." HE ALLUDED TO LONG LEAD TIMES, AND ALSO COSTS, REFERRING AGAIN TO UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH COST OF COUNTERIN-SURGENCY COURSE* (I ASSUME HE WAS ANTICIPATING SOME DELAY IN OUR

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SORTING OUR ROC ELEMENT IN MTAT PROGRAM.)

2. I TOOK THE WIND OUT OF DR. GOH'S SAILS BY PASSING ALONG NOTE VERBALE BASED UPON REFTEL B, WITH EXCEPTION OF COURSE OF FYI PORTION. DR. GOH EXPRESSED PLEASURE OVER FORTHCOMING LETTER OF OFFER, IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTED VISIT BY LT. COL DRUMMOND, SAID THAT GOS WOULD INFORM ITS ASEAN COLLEAGUES, AND AGREED TO ISSUANCE OF PRESS STATEMENT AT SOME POINT. INTER ALIA, HE COMMENTED THAT HE REGARDED PROJECTED MTAT COSTS AS FAIR. THROUGHOUT THIS PORTION OF DISCUSSION HE BEAMED APPROVAL, AND AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING THANKED ME FOR HAVING GIVEN HIM VERY GOOD NEWS.

3. COMMENT: IT SEEMS QUITE CLEAR THAT DR. GOH (AND PRESUMABLY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW AS WELL) ATTACH HIGH VALUE TO MTAT PROGRAM. EXPEDITIOUS REPOSE BY WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONCERNED TO GOS ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PROGRAM OBVIOUSLY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED HERE. I AM NOT WHOLLY CONVINCED THAT SOURCE OF ALLEGED MIS-APPREHENSIONS ABOUT U.S. RESPONSIVENESS ISN'T DR. GOH HIMSELF RATHER THAN "PM'S OFFICE." BUT IN ANY EVENT WE HAVE EVIDENTLY ALLAYED THOSE MISAPPREHENSIONS. LT. COL. DRUMMOND CAN COME AT ANY TIME THAT SUITS HIS CONVENIENCE, ALTHOUGH PRESUMABLY THE SOONER HE ARRIVES THE SOONER THE PROGRAM CAN GET UNDER WAY. THOUGHTS ON PRESS GUIDANCE OR PUBLIC STATEMENT WILL BE FORWARDED BY SEPTTEL.
HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

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